

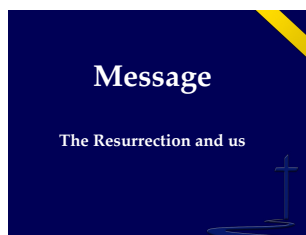
Interactive Study of Lucan Resurrection Day Narrative

Easter Day 2022

The Resurrection of Jesus - NRSV

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at **what had happened**.

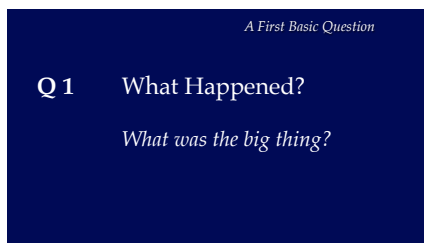
We have just heard Luke's account of the first resurrection sightings.



Note:

Luke is a serious historian linking his material together to give a reliable account. This is a report compiled by someone who heard the first and second hand reports of others much the way a journalist would form a story from information they got to hear.

Opening:



Q1 So what had happened that amazed people?

What was the big event here in Luke 24.1-12?

NB Distinguish secondary events from primary significant event.

-Not theory or explanation but what was reported to have happened?

A1 The body of Jesus was not found where it had been left in the tomb 3 days earlier.

Other aspects are secondary details around this main event.

The explanation given here for the empty tomb is: He –*Jesus*– has risen as he said he would.

Note:

There is nothing said here about the Resurrection itself. No one saw it.

The Empty Tomb is the first part of the resurrection story and all we hear from Luke today.

Three Subsequent Questions to ask of this account:

3 Subsequent Questions

Q 2 Really?

Yes - Because:

No - Because:

Q2 REALLY?

How sound and trustworthy is this report of the Empty Tomb?

Yes Why?

Possible reasons - in brief:

1. One of several accounts of resurrection - 4 Gospels +
2. This is a detailed account with times and named people - not 'once upon a time'...
3. Surprise of those involved. This was not what anyone expected.
4. Randomness of development - no structure or orchestration at work
5. Women were reported as discovering this and men did not believe them.
6. Body never found.

Or,

No Why? -

Due to alternative explanations:

- A. This does not happen in my world or life experience.
- B. Women went to the wrong tomb!
- C. Body gone, but stolen.
 - a. To whose benefit? – not that of religious authorities.
- D. Disciples faked it.
 - a. Then why did they persist in scam and die for it?
- E. Jesus had not died on cross but survived and recovered in tomb.
 - a. Old idea, eg Mohammed. But wider history agrees 100% - Jesus was executed.

Q3 If tomb was empty, is the explanation that ‘Jesus has risen from the grave’ believable?

NO?

A. People imagined it. Yet some were sceptical eg Thomas.

Yes?

B. It was predicted

Does this and other accounts of the empty tomb along with the following accounts of resurrection appearances hold?

Yes? / No? Because?

3 Subsequent Questions

Q 3 Is ‘Rising’ a believable explanation?

Yes - Because:

No - Because:

3 Subsequent Questions

Q 4 What does this mean?

Q4 If true, what does this mean?

A4 Jesus is uniquely who and what he says he is.

- Claims are 100% authentic.
- Listen to him - trust him.

- No one else in history like him. Graves of others are still there with bones inside.
- The expected resurrection Jesus and others spoke about has begun in history. This changes our horizon today and future destiny. The grave is not the ultimate box.
- A new mode of humanity has begun. Jesus Christ is a new Adam and calls us to follow him.

This is where the story comes to us.

Life without the resurrection is lived with a small horizon, a narrow sense of future and fearful hope.

There are various ways people live before a narrow horizon.

The popular advice comes in a phrase that pops up in songs and feel-good TV commercials when we are told to live today as if there is no tomorrow. This then involves buying a particular product!

Somehow that encouragement in itself is meant to get people going and activate them when feelings are down.

One school of Greek philosophy known as the Epicureans majored on this. Their advice was "Eat, drink and be merry - for tomorrow you die."

People have long realized that we live our lives today in relation to the horizon we focus on.



The narrow horizon can be experienced by putting blinkers beside our eyes. Two pieces of cardboard will do it. This was how people used to manage horses to keep them focused and calm in busy environments.

But for people today there are other blinkers that work more powerfully to limit our horizon.

These blinkers include fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness.

I expect that in some form all these things are familiar to us at some time.

They can be so constricting of our vision that we can only see what is a few meters in front of our nose and lose all awareness of everything else.

Fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness have the effect of pinching our horizon down to being very narrow and very small and shrinking all hope with it.

The disciples of Jesus were in that sort of frame after his death on the cross. The future looked very uncertain and very bleak. They were like frightened animals hiding in a hole and avoiding the light.

Then came the Resurrection of Jesus from the tomb he had been placed in.

The effect of Jesus's Resurrection completely and dramatically changed everything for the disciples because it blew their horizon wide open. It must have been mind-blowing to see Jesus alive again.

An open horizon has the effect of taking away the blinkers that people may have settled for.

An open horizon counters the effects of fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness.

The open horizon established by the Resurrection is a genuine and sound basis for really living today and being fully and boldly alive in this moment because the horizon of the future has been won by the Lord Jesus in his resurrection. Amen?



This shared faith sets up the Resurrection Community.

The Resurrection Community lives and flourishes in the Spirit of the risen Jesus standing before the open horizon established by his resurrection. The pinching effect of fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness are denied a place in the Resurrection Community. They are dissolved by Resurrection hope.

- Yes, we still face challenges,
- Yes, we still know grief and loss,
- Yes, we are at times still confused and discouraged,

BUT, The future is secure and open and we face forwards in hope.

This is what the resurrection establishes for us as a Congregation believing in Jesus crucified and risen.

That open horizon is so real and strong that we may even seek to pick up other people's pain and other people's difficulties simply because our horizon is big enough to cope with that.

For us as a Resurrection Community, fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness may be blown away by the cosmic scene change of Jesus' resurrection.

My Easter message to us as St Matt's is to throw away our blinkers and embrace the open horizon of the resurrection.

Let fear, worry, stress, resentment, chronic anger and bitterness dissolve as you enter the big space of the Resurrection.

But Francis, you don't know what happened!

Perhaps I do not, but I recognize blinkers when I see them and I believe in the resurrected Christ.

To illustrate why we need to do this I want to tell a parable devised by Søren Kierkegaard of Denmark in the 19th Century.

He told the story of the Duck Church. That was where ducks went to worship. They had a duck preacher and a duck choir. When the preacher read from Isaiah they would get very excited. "You shall run and not be weary, You shall rise up on wings of eagles!" Quack, Quack, Quack!

The Duck congregation loved it.

However, after that stirring sermon they then all waddled home for Sunday lunch.

It is very possible for blinkered Christians who love the Lord to sing resurrection songs and then waddle home as if flying had not been invented.

The songs, the story, the sermons all need to change us from waddling ducks to flying ducks.

Resurrection songs are there to guide into the big open horizon of the Resurrection and as we leave our blinker's behind.

- If God is for us, who can be against us.
- If love has conquered, why should I be fearful?
- Fear not for I am with you

My final point is to us as a community:

Church is where we learn to live this Resurrection open horizon confidence together.

We do this by being generous and forgiving in a community that has been thrown together from all lots of possibilities

If we find ourselves getting tight and anxious about something – look at the Resurrection and remember the big future assured to us in Christ.

As we resolve and learn to live our lives in that frame with that hope, we become a puzzling alternative to those trying to live well today because today is all they can see.

Embrace God's new horizon for humanity established in the Resurrection of Jesus.